GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3376
ANSWERED ON:22.03.2017
Ban on T.V. Programmes
Birla Shri Om;Joshi Shri Chandra Prakash;Venugopal Dr. Ponnusamy

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has banned the telecasting of any television programme during the last three years and the current year;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) the steps being taken by the Government to establish a reasonable balance between decency and freedom and to discourage provocative and inflammatory news in the telecast of programmes in the country; and

(d) whether it is also true the Government has banned some news channels for a day from telecasting and if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION & BROADCASTING [COL RAJYAVARDHAN RATHORE (Retd.)]

(a) to (d): As per existing regulatory framework, all programmes and advertisements telecast on private satellite TV channels and transmitted/re-transmitted through the Cable TV network are required to adhere to the Programme Code and Advertising Code prescribed under the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 and Cable Television Network Rules, 1994 framed thereunder. The Act does not provide for pre-censorship of any programme or advertisement telecast on such TV channels. However, all programmes and advertisements are required to be in conformity with the said Programme and Advertising Codes which contain a whole range of parameters to regulate programmes and advertisements including provisions to address content of indecency, provocative and inflammatory news on TV.

The Ministry has constituted an Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) under the Chairmanship of Additional Secretary, Ministry of I&B and comprising officers drawn from Ministries of Home Affairs, Defence, External Affairs, Law, Women and Child Development, Health & Family Welfare, Consumer Affairs and a representative from the industry in Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) to take cognizance suo-motu or look into specific complaints regarding violation of the Programme and Advertising Codes. The IMC functions in a recommendatory capacity. The final decision regarding penalties and its quantum is taken by the Ministry on the basis of the IMC recommendations.
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Such action may extend from issue of warnings or advisories to comply with the Programme/Advertising Codes or directing channels to run apology scrolls on their channels and can extend up to taking the channels off air temporarily for varying period depending on the gravity of the violation. As many as 11 TV channels have been ordered to stop transmission for periods ranging from 1 to 30 days during the last three years and the current year. Details are enclosed at Annexure.

Further, as part of the self-regulation mechanism, News Broadcasters Association (NBA) has set up News Broadcasting Standards Authority (NBSA) in 2008 and formulated a Code of Ethics and Broadcasting Standards covering a wide range of principles to self-regulate news broadcasting.

Indian Broadcasting Foundation (IBF) has set up a mechanism for self-regulation Broadcasting Content Complaints Council (BCCC) in case of non-news channels. As part of this, IBF has laid down Content Code & Certification Rules 2011 covering an entire gamut of content-related principles and criteria for television broadcast.

With regard to regulation of advertisements on TV channels, the Code adopted by the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI), a self-regulatory body, has been incorporated in the Advertising Code stipulated in Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 and Rules framed thereunder. ASCI has set up Consumer Complaints Council (CCC) to consider complaints with regard to advertisements.

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